# CP – Flynn

## Core

### 1NC – PIC

#### The United States federal government should end plea bargaining in every instance except for cases pursuant to the special investigation of the Trump administration conducted by the Special Counsel.

#### Plea bargains are key to stop the Trump administration

Budowsky 12/1 – Brent, was an aide to former Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Texas) and former Rep. Bill Alexander (D-Ark.), who was chief deputy majority whip of the U.S. House of Representatives. He holds an LLM in international financial law from the London School of Economics. (“Trump’s Russian winter grows colder with Flynn plea deal” http://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/362759-trumps-russian-winter-grows-colder-with-flynn-plea-deal)

The potential culpability of the president and others involving obstruction of justice will be decided by evidence, facts and law as viewed by the special counsel and the grand jury considering the matter.

It was wrong, and has evidentiary value, for the president to fire former New York U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara while he was investigating the Russia scandal.

It was wrong, and has evidentiary value, for the president to fire former acting Attorney General Sally Yates when she warned the White House that Russians could have material to blackmail former national security adviser, Michael Flynn.

It was wrong, and has evidentiary value, for the president to fire former FBI Director James Comey while he was investigating the Russia scandal after asking Comey to drop the investigation of Flynn. It was a terrible mistake by Trump, and has evidentiary value, for Trump to admit the reason he fired Comey was to lower pressure on himself brought by the investigation that Comey was then leading.

It was wrong, and has evidentiary value, for the president to humiliate and threaten Attorney General Jeff Sessions through intense public criticism and letting it be known he might fire Sessions. It was wrong, and has evidentiary value, for Sessions to refuse to tell the House Intelligence Committee whether Trump has pressured him to end or limit the Russia investigation, which he will be asked about by the special counsel and may have to testify about in court.

It was wrong, and has evidentiary value, for Sessions to recuse himself from the Russia investigation and then take actions that impeded the Russia investigation he had recused himself from, such as supporting the firing of Comey.

In this context it was wrong, and has evidentiary value, for Trump to pressure Senate Republicans to cut short their investigations of the Russia scandal.

It is wrong, and has evidentiary value, that Trump stands virtually alone among high-level officials in refusing to unequivocally state that the Russians have attacked our country and continue to attack our country, which intelligence and law enforcement agencies warn about today.

Stay tuned for the next blockbuster event in the Russian scandal, which is probably imminent after the Flynn plea bargain. Sealed indictments or other plea bargains may have already been reached but not yet disclosed. If not, they will probably happen soon. There are multiple issues involving multiple Trump associates now under investigation, including failure to disclose foreign contacts as required by law.

The potential for an obstruction of justice charge is real and growing. The Flynn plea will set off a chain reaction with more evidence, revelations, indictments and plea bargains that will continue to make Trump’s cold Russian winter colder by the day, until the investigation is concluded and the fate of the Trump presidency is decided one way or the other, once and for all.

#### An unchecked Trump ensures global nuclear conflict from a collapse of trade, democracy, leadership, the war on terror and antagonism of Iran and North Korea

Hathaway and Shapiro 11/10, International Law Prof at Yale and Law/Philosophy Prof at Yale (Oona, and Scott, THE BIG PICTURE: TRUMP, TRADE, AND WAR, www.publicbooks.org/the-big-picture-trump-trade-and-war/)

President Trump has proven to be a reckless leader. His refusal to denounce white supremacists, his repeated attacks on journalists and free speech, his courting of Vladimir Putin, his attempts to belittle and provoke the North Korean leader—every single one of these acts is corrosive and destabilizing. While the media has understandably focused on the risks of authoritarianism and nuclear war, there is another grave danger that has largely gone unnoticed: President Trump’s rejection of free trade. It may take years before historians fully understand why President Trump won the election. But already we know that his message resonated with an electorate that had suffered from economic dislocation and growing inequality and that was tired of what has been called a “forever war.” Trump promised a new America, an America that put itself (or at least certain parts of itself) first. To the candidate and his electorate, our 70 years of global order were, at best, outdated. As his campaign progressed, Trump began hawking an international agenda built on two pillars: protectionism and isolationism. In a nod to the isolationists and pro-Fascists of 1930s America, he even began referring to this agenda as “America First.” During the 2016 campaign, Donald Trump attacked free trade, promising to erect tariffs and barriers to keep manufacturing and jobs at home, to withdraw from negotiations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership, to renegotiate NAFTA, and to punish China for devaluing its currency. Trump’s critics pointed out many problems with his protectionist positions: protectionism is economically inefficient; it is an assault on the post–World War Two American conception of freedom and liberty; it is a futile fight against globalization—a stance that has been proven, time and again, to be on the wrong side of history. Trump’s isolationism is a retreat from America’s role in world affairs and will lead to global instability; a declaration of defeat in the global war on terror; and an abdication of America’s decades-long policy of spreading democracy and protecting human rights. But the critics missed the biggest problem with Trump’s embrace of protectionism: trade today plays the role in the world order that war once played. Trade gives states a way to influence one another without resorting to force, as was once common. Giving up on trade means giving up on that influence, leaving states with little choice but war. To understand why this is the case, one has to return to what we have described as the “Old World Order.” For hundreds of years, waging war was considered a necessary function to run a state. As described and systematized by the so-called “father of international law,” Hugo Grotius, in the early 17th century, international law permitted states to use force in order to right (perceived or otherwise) wrongs. Actually, it did more than permit war. The system relied on war as a tool of international justice. It was the way in which states collected unpaid debts, obtained compensation for wrongful harms, enforced treaty obligations, and protected religious interests, among much else. In this world, war to enforce legal rights was perfectly legal but economic sanctions by neutrals against belligerents were illegal. Neutrals had a duty of impartiality in a conflict—states outside of a conflict could not offer more favorable trade terms to the state it favored. To do so was illegal, and would give the disfavored state a cause for war. As we argue in our recent book, The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World, that all changed in 1928. Over 60 countries ratified the Kellogg-Briand Pact (also known as the Peace Pact). By outlawing war, the Peace Pact changed the role of war in the international system. War could no longer legally be used between states to resolve disputes, to right wrongs, or to force uncooperative states to cooperate. The Pact did not work overnight, of course. As we show in the book, it took decades to figure out how to make the promise of the Pact a reality. One of the crucial moments came shortly after it entered into force: in 1931, Japan, which was a party to the agreement, committed a clear violation by invading Manchuria. The world was unsure how to respond: surely it could not enforce the prohibition on war with war. But if not war, then what? The answer came when US Secretary of State Henry Stimson wrote to Japan and China on January 8, 1932: “The American Government … does not intend to recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the covenants and obligations of the Pact of Paris”—another name for the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The League of Nations quickly followed suit. The doctrine of nonrecognition would become known as the “Stimson Doctrine” and would give rise to a new way to enforce the law: not with war, but with so-called “sanctions of peace.” As Stimson explained in a speech entitled “The Pact of Paris: Three Year Later,” the Pact had set in motion a change in the laws of neutrality, which for the first time permitted states to put in place economic sanctions against parties to a war, using trade, not force, as a way to enforce the law. Economic sanctions thus slowly began to fill the void left by the decision to outlaw war. They became one of the most powerful weapons a country could wield. By placing sanctions on uncooperative nations, the international community could effect change without violence. States could no longer use war to enforce the law, but they could use sanctions to “outcast” misbehaving states. To see how sanctions can be used as a substitute for war, consider the events that led to the Iran nuclear deal. In 2006, the UN Security Council joined the United States in economically isolating Iran. It demanded that Iran stop uranium enrichment and imposed progressively more painful trade sanctions in response to its continued intransigence. As a result, Iran was shut out of global commerce not only by the United States and a few sympathetic countries but by nearly every nation in the world. The sanctions regime was further tightened in 2010 by an obscure office in the US Treasury Department: the Office of Foreign Asset Control, or OFAC. At the behest of OFAC, Congress passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, which strengthened US sanctions on the Iranian energy industry and financial sector. Whereas previous measures had targeted only Iranian firms, Congress now authorized the imposition of “secondary sanctions” on any bank, anywhere in the world, that transacted with Iran’s central bank. Any bank placed on the blacklist could be cut off from access to the US financial sector. The United States offered banks a choice: you can do business with the United States or you can do business with Iran; you can’t do both. These sanctions worked remarkably well: Iran’s oil exports fell by more than 50 percent, the value of the nation’s currency (the rial) plummeted, and in 2012, Iran’s economy shrunk by about 7 percent, prompting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to complain: “The enemy has announced that it has imposed sanctions …This is a hidden war. A broad and heavy war, spread across the globe.” Ahmadinejad’s statement was evidence that the sanctions were imposing costs. But as David Cohen, the Treasury official who oversaw OFAC, pointed out, the sanctions were not a secret war. They were instead “done for all the world to see” and, indeed, “done by all the world.” Nor were they actually a war, Cohen continued, but “the alternative to war.” And that alternative worked. In August 2013, Hassan Rouhani succeeded President Ahmadinejad, after running on a platform of improving relations with the rest of the world and sanctions relief. The new Iranian leadership began negotiations with the “P5 plus one”—the permanent five members of the Security Council plus Germany, the economic steward of the EU. In November 2013, they reached an interim agreement limiting Iran’s nuclear program and partially lifting sanctions and made plans to complete a more permanent, comprehensive agreement. For the first time in decades, there was real hope that a nuclear Iran could be prevented through discussions at the negotiating table rather than with military strikes. Now President Trump, by calling into question the United States’ commitment to free trade and global economic integration, is threatening to unilaterally disarm. The less business it does with the rest of the world, the less influence it will have in the modern legal order. Raising trade barriers, and withdrawing from free trade agreements, means giving up power and influence. The President’s twin messages of isolationism and protectionism are dangerous. If the US pulls back from unilateral trade and cooperation, it will be left with fewer diplomatic options. States that outcast themselves find it difficult to outcast other nations. What’s more, giving up the capacity to influence states through trade can cause states to look longingly at the Old World Order tool of influence: war. North Korea is an excellent example of a country caught in this trap. It is so isolated from the global economy that it has little influence over other states other than the threat of military force. Its capacity to exert influence outside its borders depends entirely on its nuclear weapons program; it has nothing else. Indeed, even as Trump has been threatening to withdraw from free trade arrangements, he has been relying more heavily on the military to get what he wants. He has doubled-down on virtually every American military engagement. He has sent US troops into Syria to assist the fight against ISIS. He has stepped up support for the Saudi-led fight in Yemen, even in the face of reported war crimes. He has fired missiles in retaliation for Syrian chemical weapons attacks. In September, Trump announced that he is sending more US troops into Afghanistan. He has loosened the rules of engagement in Afghanistan as well. He has even suggested that he might use the US military in Venezuela. In front of the United Nations, the home of peaceful cooperation, he threatened to “totally destroy” North Korea, implying his willingness to use weapons against millions of civilians. And, most recently, Trump has refused to certify part of the Iran nuclear deal, raising the specter that the deal will break down and Trump will ultimately resort to military force against Iran. The lesson Trump has yet to learn is that in the modern era trade is more than trade. Trade is the power to exert peaceful and effective influence abroad. Giving up on trade means walking away from that influence. “America First” threatens to put America last, at least on the international stage. Trump’s lasting legacy may be even more destabilizing than the most dire predictions issued at the start of his presidency. By pulling back American support for free trade, Trump threatens America’s nearly century-long run of being the “indispensable nation.” Even after he leaves office, that lesson will linger. For decades, the US dollar has been the foundation of the world’s economy, countries have freely lent to the United States, and English has been the dominant language on the international stage. If the United States relinquishes its leadership role, we should wonder: who will fill the void we leave behind?

#### It also turns the case via rollback – Trump would never approve of abolishing plea bargains from the criminal justice system

### \*2NR – Overview

### AT: Perm Do Both

### AT: Perm Do the CP

### AT: Impeachment Bad

### AT: Impeachment Won’t Work

#### Even if impeachment won’t work, a Trump plea deal will get him out of office.

Wehle 17 – Kimberly Wehle, Opinion Contributor, 12-8-2017 ("A presidential plea deal is better than impeachment," TheHill, Available Online at http://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/363875-a-presidential-plea-deal-is-better-than-impeachment)

Things are heating up with Robert Mueller’s criminal probe of Russia’s interference with the 2016 presidential election. And the Trump campaign’s ties to that Russian effort continue to prompt questions, including whether — if the evidence shows that he violated the law — the president himself could be held accountable in the criminal justice system.

President Trump’s personal attorney has publicly declared that his client cannot as a matter of constitutional law be charged and prosecuted for obstruction of justice. Is he right?

This is a highly complex legal question, to be sure. But the likely answer is no, for a number of reasons. To make it short, it is hard to persuasively dispute that the president is not above the law under the Constitution, and that he can certainly act in ways that would legally amount to obstruction of justice.

Whether impeachment is the exclusive constitutional route to presidential accountability is doubtful as well, although like much of the Trump presidency, nobody knows for sure what the Supreme Court would say.

But more to the point, if this president did, in fact, obstruct justice or violate any other criminal law, the tea leaves suggest that, strategically, neither a public indictment, criminal trial or an impeachment trial are likely. The better course for the country and the Trump family would be for the president to give serious consideration to resignation and a plea deal.

Mueller’s predecessors both considered the question of whether a president can be prosecuted and indicted while in office. Both answered yes.

In 1998, Ken Starr’s office analyzed whether President Clinton could be indicted after deputies advised him that they had gathered enough evidence to ask a grand jury for an indictment. Starr’s legal ethics counsel concluded that a sitting president is subject to indictment and criminal prosecution, but that he might not be subject to imprisonment during his term.

In 1974, Leon Jaworski’s office concluded the same thing about President Nixon: he could be indicted. The question is not a slam-dunk, however, so Jaworski named Nixon an “unindicted co-conspirator” in an apparent ploy to avoid a constitutional showdown.

For its part, the Supreme Court held in 1997 that Clinton could be subject to a private civil lawsuit while in office. That effort ultimately led to his impeachment. The Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Counsel concluded in 1973 and again in 2000 that a criminal prosecution would undermine the executive branch’s ability to perform its functions, in the wake of Clinton v. Jones.

Trump cannot viably claim that Article II of the Constitution fully insulates him from legal interference with his ability to do his job as president. The question may come down to whether a criminal prosecution is somehow different from a civil claim for money damages, and the Supreme Court would no doubt consider these historical views if Trump’s sky were to fall and the issue to reach the court

In any event, Mueller’s team of career prosecutors will want to see justice done, and it appears that this Republican Congress is ideologically disinclined to take a hard look at impeaching any Republican president, regardless of the charges. Thus, Mueller might do well to avoid a lengthy legal battle over the constitutionality of his prosecutorial authority, and strike a deal with Trump. This maneuver assumes, of course, that Mueller is able to compile an evidentiary dossier of criminal wrongdoing that would put serious pressure on the first family to do a deal.

Nobody but Mueller’s team knows for sure what evidence it has (if any) that implicates the president of the United States in criminal wrongdoing. But we do know that Trump’s sons and son-in-law — to some extent, at least — are entangled in the Flynn drama that led to his perjury plea. Nixon and Clinton had their own hides to save. Trump also has family members to think about, and an impeachment process won’t cover them. The Trump children change the stakes in this particular game, and Mueller has shown through Flynn’s son that he is willing to go down the familial path.

If the evidence does wind up leading to the White House, therefore, the best outcome for the Trumps might be the president’s resignation and their respective plea(s) to something relatively trivial. (That would still leave the New York Attorney General investigation of Trump’s dealings out there, but Mueller could try to broker a global resolution.)

Flynn’s fate is perhaps premonitory. If all that Mueller had against Flynn was a perjury charge, it’s unlikely he would have agreed to plead guilty at this juncture. With the whiff of a presidential pardon in the air, all Flynn had to do was call Mueller’s bluff, force a trial on a diminutive charge, accept a pardon, and paint the entire investigation as much political ado about nothing.

Given the tight-lipped ethos of the Mueller operation, we are living in the world of speculation, to be sure. But with Mike Flynn Jr. in the mix, it seems more likely that his dad struck a deal — and one that suggests he has information that hurts people up the chain of command.

### AT: Pardon Flynn

#### If Trump pardons Flynn, it’ll be easier for Mueller to take down Trump.

Sit 17 – Ryan Sit, 12-1-2017 ("Will Donald Trump pardon Michael Flynn? He could, but he shouldn't," Newsweek, Available Online at http://www.newsweek.com/presidential-pardon-donald-trump-michael-flynn-robert-mueller-russia-728983)

President Donald Trump could easily pardon Michael Flynn—but doing so could actually make the case against the president even easier, a legal expert says.

Flynn, who pleaded guilty on Friday to lying to the FBI about his contacts with a Russian ambassador, had resigned after less than a month as national security adviser because he misled Vice President Pence about those contacts.

In the nine months since his resignation, many have speculated that Trump would pardon Flynn, or anyone else targeted in special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election.

Trump could do it, but it could end up strengthening a case against Trump for obstructing justice, according to Andrew Wright, a law professor at Savannah Law School and former associate counsel for President Barack Obama.

"Has the raw power to do it, but [pardoning Flynn] itself could be an act of obstruction of justice if he did it for the corrupt intent of thwarting the investigation," Wright said.

If Trump used his pardoning power as a weapon to keep Flynn from cooperating in any way with the special counsel, it could be grounds for a conspiracy to commit obstruction of justice, according to Wright.

"Pardoning him would have been a seismic event even before [Flynn's guilty plea on Friday]," Wright said. But in light of Friday's events, a pardon "would be perceived for exactly what it is: purely for a self-protective act rather than an act for in the best interest of the United States. And that’s the kind of abuse of trust the Founders were concerned about with our democracy."

### AT: Flynn Not Important

#### Flynn’s plea deal is crucial to build a case for Trump impeachment.

Litman 12/1 – Harry, former United States attorney and deputy assistant attorney general, teaches at the University of California, Los Angeles, Law School and practices law at Constantine Cannon, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/01/opinion/michael-flynn-guilty-plea-takeaways.html

Michael Flynn’s plea on Friday to a single count of lying to the F.B.I. is a seismic event in the special counsel investigation.

For starters, it portends the likelihood of impeachable charges being brought against the president of the United States. Mr. Flynn, a former national security adviser, acknowledged that he was cooperating with the investigation. His testimony could bring into the light a scandal of historic proportions in which the not-yet-installed Trump administration, including Donald Trump personally, sought to subvert American foreign policy before taking office.

The repercussions of the plea will be months in the making, but it’s not an exaggeration to say that the events to which Mr. Flynn has agreed to testify will take their place in the history books alongside the Watergate and Iran-contra scandals.

We’re in new — and highly inflammatory — territory. Here are 10 immediate takeaways from today’s news.

This is not a meet-in-the-middle deal.

Both sides did not assess their risks and decide to hedge them with a compromise. Rather, as we’ve known for weeks, the special counsel, Robert Mueller, believed he had sufficient evidence to indict Mr. Flynn on a long list of criminal charges, including money laundering, tax offense and false statements. Mr. Mueller’s team, as is standard prosecutorial practice, presented Mr. Flynn with that list and helped him understand that his life as he knew it had ended.

This is much bigger than Paul Manafort.

Mr. Manafort, the former Trump campaign chairman, has been indicted, but this is a plea, and Mr. Flynn’s cooperation — the real goal of bringing criminal charges — has been secured. This puts Mr. Flynn in the same camp as George Papadopoulos, the campaign adviser who pleaded guilty to making false statements to the F.B.I. on Oct. 5 and is also cooperating with the investigation. Unlike Mr. Papadopoulos, though, Mr. Flynn was a top adviser who was at the center of communication with Russia as well as the potential obstruction of justice by President Trump in seeking to shut down the Flynn investigation itself. Mr. Flynn was considered as a running mate and reportedly stayed quite close to the president even after being forced out of the administration in February.

Mr. Flynn has just become the prosecution’s star witness.

Mr. Flynn’s plea on Friday concerned just one crime. The other charges that prosecutors threatened him with continue to hang over him. Mr. Flynn will not receive credit for his cooperation until after it has ended, at which point Mr. Mueller may — if Mr. Flynn has held up his end of the bargain — move to dismiss the other charges. In the interim, Mr. Flynn has to do anything Mr. Mueller’s team requests.

The charge Mr. Flynn is pleading guilty to is a stunning one.

He is admitting that last December, before Mr. Trump’s inauguration, he asked the Russian ambassador at the time, Sergey Kislyak, to refrain from reacting aggressively to sanctions that the Obama administration had imposed on Russia. Russia reportedly agreed and Mr. Kislyak told Mr. Flynn later that it had chosen to moderate its response to the sanctions to make nice with the Trump team.

It seems Mr. Trump himself directed Mr. Flynn to make contact with the Russians.

If Mr. Flynn testifies to this — ABC’s Brian Ross is reporting that he will — it presents another impeachable offense along with the possible obstruction of justice. Even more, it brings the whole matter well outside the purview of the criminal courts into the province of a political scandal, indicating abuses of power arguably well beyond those in the Watergate and Iran-contra affairs.

Mr. Flynn asked Russia to intervene at the United Nations on behalf of Israel.

He is admitting that last Dec. 22, he asked Mr. Kislyak to delay or defeat a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Israel for its settlement policy, which the Obama administration had decided to let pass. The possible involvement or knowledge of Israel in the case will be one of many questions that congressional investigators will pursue.

The lying is bad. Conducting rogue American foreign policy is worse.

In the end, Mr. Flynn’s lies are secondary to the demonstration that the Trump administration was actively undermining American foreign policy before it took office. This will most likely prove the most abiding scandalous fact of the Mueller investigation. And it’s one that nobody on either side of the aisle could possibly defend.

Mr. Flynn’s cooperation portends extreme peril for a variety of people in the president’s orbit.

Most immediately vulnerable? Jared Kushner. Mr. Flynn was present at a Dec. 1, 2016, Trump Tower meeting where Mr. Kushner is said to have proposed to Mr. Kislyak setting up a back channel for the transition team to communicate with Moscow.

Those and related details are now front and center in the investigation. Criminal liability aside, Friday’s news — including a report that Mr. Kushner was the one who directed Mr. Flynn to contact Russia — helps cement Mr. Kushner’s reputation as a callow and arrogant freelancer, authorized by the president to act way over his head, and possibly impairing some of the most delicate and important issues of foreign policy. (A possible winner, on the other hand, is the younger Mike Flynn, about whose criminal liability his father was extremely concerned. Look to see how Mr. Mueller now chooses to treat the younger Mr. Flynn, who is being investigated over his work for his father’s lobbying business.)

Mr. Flynn’s plea raises the likelihood that he will give testimony in support of a potential obstruction of justice charge against Mr. Trump.

The basis for the possible obstruction charge against the president has been his efforts to get the F.B.I. director, James Comey, to shut down the Flynn investigation during a Feb. 14 meeting in the Oval Office, coupled with his multiple lies on the subject. Obstruction is plainly an impeachable offense: It’s the offense for which Richard Nixon was threatened with impeachment.

For months, it has seemed the possible culminating charge of the Mueller investigation, a straightforward and readily understandable high crime or misdemeanor. Such a charge, per Department of Justice policy, would not be brought in the criminal courts but would rather form the basis of a report to Congress potentially recommending impeachment. If Mr. Mueller brings that charge, it will be on the strength of Mr. Flynn’s testimony.

Mr. Trump’s defenders have fewer and fewer cards to play.

There had been a prospect that the obstruction of justice charge, if it did come, would be dismissed by die-hard Trump supporters as subject to conflicting interpretations of Mr. Trump’s state of mind, and therefore not deserving of impeachment or removal. No longer. Now Mr. Trump and his circle will stand accused by a former member of the administration with plainly unconstitutional meddling in the most sensitive of foreign policy issues. If the Congress and country believe Michael Flynn’s account, it is hard to see what even the staunchest Trump defenders can say in defense. That means that as Mr. Trump and the administration look out at the new landscape featuring a guilty Michael Flynn, it’s kill or be killed.

#### Papadopoulos will give Mueller enough evidence to indict Trump.

Marcus 17 – Josh Marcus, 10-31-2017 ("6 reasons team Trump should worry about Papadopoulos' plea deal," VICE News, Available Online at https://news.vice.com/en\_us/article/a3jn38/george-papadopoulos-plea-deal-is-bad-news-for-trump)

Here are the six worst revelations for Trump:

A new, way worse timeline

Papadopoulos’ plea suggests the Trump campaign knew about the Russian government’s effort even earlier than has been previously understood, as Just Security explains.

The plea describes how he began corresponding with an overseas professor in March who promised dirt from the Kremlin on Hillary Clinton, including “thousands” of Clinton’s emails.

“In truth and in fact… Papadopoulos understood the Professor to have substantial connections to high-level Russian government officials and that the Professor spoke with some of those officials in Moscow before telling defendant Papadopoulos about the ‘dirt.’”

The plea also describes how Papadopoulos kept at least two “high level campaign officials” abreast of his efforts.

This suggests senior Trump campaign knew about the DNC hacking long before the public found out that June, and were aware of a high-level effort from Russia to boost its campaign before Paul Manafort, Donald Trump Jr., and presidential advisor Jared Kushner met with a Kremlin-connected lawyer in June in Trump Tower to discuss dirt on Hillary Clinton.

It’s especially bad for Trump and Jeff Sessions

On March 31, Papadopoulos briefed a national security campaign session that included the President Trump and Jeff Sessions about his work. According to the plea, Papadopoulos, “introduced himself to the group, he stated, in sum and substance, that he had connections that could help arrange a meeting between then-candidate Trump and President Putin.”

Sessions and Trump have both categorically denied knowledge of any collusion between the campaign and Russia.

The photo, mixed with new info from the plea, is particularly suspect for Sessions, who denied knowing about contact between the campaign and Russia under oath in Senate testimony, as The Intercept pointed out.

Mueller’s got the (email) receipts

Beyond just the probability that Trump, Sessions, and Manafort knew about the Russian outreach Papadopoulos was engaging in, the plea also suggests Mueller’s got even more dirt on senior campaign staff.

The plea refers to emails sent by:

A “campaign supervisor”

“Another high-ranking” campaign official

That means, as Just Security notes, that Mueller probably has these emails and their responses, which puts at least two more Trump campaign officials in the firing line.

Though the court filings don’t name names, the Washington Post identified the campaign officials. The “campaign supervisor” was Sam Clovis, Trump’s national campaign co-chairman, his attorney confirmed.

The other “high-ranking” campaign official, was one-time campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, according to people with knowledge of emails turned over to Congress for its Russia investigations.

They show approval of his Russia plans

After Papadopoulos met with the professor in London in March, one of his supervisors in the Trump campaign congratulated him on efforts to seek a meeting between Trump’s campaign and the Kremlin.

The campaign official, according to the plea, said he’d “‘work it through the campaign,’ but that no commitments should be made at that point. The campaign supervisor added: “Great work.”

In an undated footnote, an official told another campaign official about trying to set up a trip, saying, “Let[‘]s discuss. We need someone to communicate that DT is not doing these trips. It should be someone low level in the campaign so as not to send any signal.”

That May, Carter Page, another former campaign official, visited Russia, and Politico reported the campaign knew about it in advance.

Later on, in August, the campaign supervisor told Papadopoulos, “I would encourage you” and another foreign policy advisor to the campaign to “make the trip, if it is feasible.”

It’s probably worse than we know

FBI agents arrested Papadopoulos, ultimately not for any of sketchy dealings with Russia, but for lying to FBI agents about them. Since then, between July 27 and October 30, he accepted a guilty plea deal and “met with the Government on numerous occasions to provide information and answer questions.”

This means there’s probably a lot more in store for the Trump administration we don’t even know about yet.

Some clues appear in a document that Mueller’s team filed alongside the plea, which explained why they sought to keep it sealed for the last month.

As Buzzfeed’s Zoe Tillman explained:

That suggests Papadopoulos’ connections to other, higher-level campaign officials are still in play. Some, like legal analyst and writer Jeffrey Toobin, have speculated that it could even have meant that Papadopoulos wore a wire in conversations with those connected to the investigation once he agreed to cooperate

And, because he took a plea deal, Mueller might know about some even worse offense Papadopoulos committed, which he didn’t prosecute to secure Papadopoulus’ cooperation.

# Theory

## AT: Solvency Adv

### 2NR – A2: Solvency Adv Theory

### A2 Predictability

### A2 Read as DA

## Thero – PICs Good

### 2NR A2 PICs Bad [Whole Res Affs]

### 2NR A2 PICs Bad [Plan Affs]

### A2 Predictability

### A2 Strat Skew

### A2 Vague Plans

### A2 Read as DA

### A2 Affirming is Hard

## Condo PICs Good

### 2NR A2 Condo PICs Bad

### A2 Other PICs

### A2 Strat Skew

### A2 Policymaking Good

### A2 Predictability

### Drop the Arg